

REMARKS

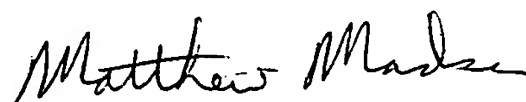
Response to the Restriction Requirement

The Restriction Requirement is drawn to claims 1-22 as originally filed. However, the currently pending claims are amended claims 1, 7-9, and 11-13, and new claims 23-36. Apparently, due to a delay in matching the preliminary amendment (filed concomitantly with the application) with the remainder of the file, the Examiner was not in possession of the pending claims when the Restriction Requirement was prepared.

During a December 11, 2003 telephone call between the Examiner and the undersigned attorney, the Examiner indicated that Applicant should ignore the December 3, 2003 Restriction Requirement and await issuance of a new Office Action based on the amended claims. Thus, Applicant cannot provisionally elect claims for examination at this time.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant believes this paper to be fully responsive to the December 3, 2003 restriction requirement. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (713) 787-1589 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,



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